

## **President's Remarks**

### **Opening Session**

**August 19, 2013**

#### **Capital Campaign**

You have in your seat a letter from Dr. Brent Cunningham and Mrs. Belinda Blackburn co-chairs respectively for the Faculty Campaign and the Staff Campaign. During the past year we have undertaken the steps necessary to determine the university's readiness for a new comprehensive capital campaign.

The JSU Foundation retained the JF Smith Group to conduct a feasibility study to gather input from the various constituencies of the university, to survey our constituents' perceptions of the university and its mission, and to assess what campaign initiatives were of priority among those interviewed. Of those interviewed, 98% believe in the mission of JSU and 96% said that they believe we are fulfilling that mission. Furthermore, 96% rated the quality of the academic education they received while at JSU as excellent, very good or good and 95% rated the quality of the faculty as excellent, very good or good. The feasibility study was presented to the JSU Foundation Board in the spring and the Foundation recommended to the JSU Board of Trustees in April that a campaign be undertaken with a working goal of \$35.1 million.

That goal was approved, along with initial priorities for fundraising. These priorities include a music performance hall, endowed scholarships, funds for innovation and collaborative learning, and support for athletic facilities and operations and a university wide fund for excellence. Also

included on the list of priorities is support for immediate needs of the university through the annual fund and future support through estate gifts.

We are currently in the planning phase and the initial leadership gift phase of a five year comprehensive campaign. Our campaign slogan is “Deeply Rooted. Future Driven.” It captures both the legacy and vision for the university

### Deeply Rooted

JSU is deeply rooted in the region, providing premier education opportunities and service to the citizens of northeast Alabama and beyond for 130 years;

JSU is deeply rooted in the lives of almost 60K alumni who have attended;

And deeply rooted for all who received the knowledge, skills and extra-curricular experiences that helped shape who they are and who they will become.

### Future Driven

However we are not content to merely rest on the legacy of the past 130 years.

The vision of JSU is to become a “Learning Centered Campus”<sup>1</sup> that provides our current and future students with the “21st Century Skills” needed to be leaders in their chosen vocation.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of Learning Centered, JSU Strategic Plan (Power Point), [http://www.jsu.edu/president/pdf/Strategic\\_Plan\\_2011-2016.pdf](http://www.jsu.edu/president/pdf/Strategic_Plan_2011-2016.pdf), 4th of 17 slides.

Through the strategic use of technology as you have seen in this morning's presentation we will encourage innovation and collaboration, we are seeking to transform the classroom experience into a model for 21st Century learning.

The "Deeply Rooted. Future Driven." campaign will be the university's largest campaign to date. Over each of the past five years, funding from the State has declined \$14 million. Since 2008 that is a total of \$70 million lost in State appropriations. This of course is due to the economy which has affected all endeavors not just education. In addition, grants from Federal sources have been much harder to secure.

If we are to move JSU forward, we must increase private support to the university. This campaign will help accomplish that. I urge all of you to join with us in making this campaign a success, not just by your participation in giving, but also through helping us identify those individuals who can partner with us and invest in our vision for the future at JSU.

It is more important that we are able to say that 100% of our trustees, administrators, faculty and staff have given to the campaign than what the total amount given may be. The power of being able to say that 100% of the university has given is tremendous when asking for support from others.

I would like to introduce Dr. Brent Cunningham, Professor of Marketing, and the Faculty Chair of the Faculty Campaign. He along with Staff Chair, Belinda Blackburn, will lead our efforts to reach 100% participation by faculty and staff in the "Deeply Rooted. Future Driven." campaign.

Thank you Dr. Cunningham. Thank you, Dr. Simmons and Ms. Christopher.

## **Remarks**

Our sleepy summer has come to an end. Rush brings the beautiful young ladies back, our sports teams return and prepare for fall competition, and the sound of the Southerners practicing fills the air. I know of no other more welcoming sights or sounds for all of us at JSU.

Here to join us are over seventy new faculty and staff as we begin this new academic year, the 131<sup>st</sup> of our University. Welcome to Alabama which is an American Indian name that should mean unpredictable weather. I never remember a wetter summer nor a cooler July and August. Many suffer from allergies to mold and mildew like I do. In fact, I am sorry that Dr. Lewis, Vice President for University Advancement is unable to attend this morning as he is at the doctor's office with possible bronchitis.

Provost Turner has challenged us to be tech savvy and Learning Centered<sup>i</sup> for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

Ms Christopher and the QEP Team have truly "Fast-Forwarded" us!

Dr. Simmons has outlined our Strategic Plan and we are in full preparation for SACS reaffirmation and the Quality Enhancement Plan, "Fast-Forwarded," All of which is in full swing in preparation for our visiting SACS Team this Spring. I loved Dr. Simmons analogy of building the SACS Self-Study to building a cake.

I think we **can** have our cake and eat it too! I want to remind you that the university, set a high standard when our SACS Review Committee joined us Spring Semester 2012 to review JSU for our new Level V accreditation in offering the Doctorate of Emergency Management. Not only was this program approved with no recommendations, the University now has a clear runway to launch two additional doctoral programs. As we move toward reaffirmation of our university in 2014 let us make “Zero Recommendations” our goal. I believe that through the pursuit of perfection we will find excellence thus building our cake, enjoying and thus eating it, and keeping it for the next ten years of accreditation!

You have accomplished much in the past year and we have many good things to look forward to in this next year. I can point to the many examples you saw in the video this morning, each division is an important contributor to JSU’s mission and to our community; but I have never been more proud of this university and this community when you all worked together to support the effort to build a “Smart Home” for our wounded veteran, our former student, Marine sergeant Ben Tomlinson. You all helped in promoting the concert, raising funds, building the stage, greeting the crowd, preparing the sights and sounds, breaking down the stage, packing the equipment, and cleaning up afterwards. Thanks to your efforts the concert by The Lt. Dan Band with Gary Sinise and the [Stephen Siller Tunnel To Towers Foundation](#) raised enough donations to build this special home for Ben and we had a great time doing it.

Today I have an advertisement announcing the concert signed by Gary Sinise in appreciation of JSU’s efforts that I want to present to the Physical Plant and House Keeping. They can have it on display for all to see what a difference this university makes in our community. Thank you Mrs.

Barker and Mr. Lord for accepting this on behalf of all of the men and women of our Physical Plant and House Keeping.

As we begin this year we do not know what enrollment number will be. Our summer orientation is about the same as last year and our Faculty Scholarships continue to attract a brighter group of students each year. We fully anticipate that our average ACT for this year's entering class will again rise. As you saw in this morning's video the entering freshman class ACT average composite score has risen from 19 to more than 22 over the last three years. However our biggest challenge is to retain students. Changes in Federal financial aid have lowered the eligibility for Pell Grants, eliminating families formerly eligible for aid. Only recently did Congress move to fix the interest rate for loans leaving little time for many to plan for attendance this fall. In Alabama our number of adults with a baccalaureate degree or higher is 21.7%. We are yet to reach the national average of 30%<sup>2</sup>. Yet our profession continues to educate a majority of the leaders in our democracy. It is up to all of us to implement the strategies and new technologies we have seen today to reach the student we serve and truly make them part of a Learning Centered University. Our future as an institution of higher education depends on it and so does the democracy we serve.

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<sup>2</sup>Educational Attainment of Adults, Almanac 2012-13, The Chronicle of Higher Education, pp. 32 and 66.

If our numbers of returning and new students meet reasonable expectations, I will ask the Trustees at the October Board meeting to approve a 2% increase for all employees who were employed full time with the University as of July 1, 2013.

Tomorrow we will welcome our new students at Freshman Convocation in JSU Stadium at 6:30 p.m. Please come, it is important to have our students see you there. We will have a cookout on Dillon Field afterwards so be sure to bring your family. If inclement weather comes to Alabama as may well be, we will be in the Pete Mathews Coliseum. We will make that call by 1pm tomorrow.

Thank you for all the work you do for our students and this University. It is a pleasure and my privilege to work with you as your president. Have a great year.

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